

of resources there that could be turned back to the private sector for future development. That could actually grow this economy.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, the Federal Government has \$950 billion worth of property it is not using right now. We are spending \$9 billion a year taking care of it, and we have a budget gimmick that says an agency that needs a new building, because we are going to account for the cost of that building in the year in which they buy it and charge it all to the agency—what are we doing? We are leasing buildings. I guarantee we could own them much more cheaply than we could lease them. What we should be doing is changing that and getting rid of the excess property, lowering our cost to maintain it—there is 9 out of the 1,500 we have to do, right there, if we would just do that—and then change the way we purchase buildings for the Federal Government so the agency can own it instead of leasing it because it costs, over the life of the building, about twice the lease.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, as someone who has been in the real estate business for almost 30 years, there is enormous opportunity. I know that when I was mayor, we put more of the lands—we are not talking parks; we are talking about just surplus old buildings and sites that are no longer in use—we put them back into operation because not only will it save the Federal Government money in the sense of getting that surplus property off the books, but what we end up doing is turning that into economic development companies for those communities. The private sector will come in and revitalize it and use it. There are many ideas out there.

I thank the Senator for the opportunity to sponsor this with him. As the Senator said, \$500 million is the minimum. I think it is close to \$1 billion just on this one idea.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

FAA AIR TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the

Senate will resume consideration of S. 223, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 223) to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide for modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Wicker amendment No. 14, to exclude employees of the Transportation Security Administration from the collective bargaining rights of Federal employees.

Blunt amendment No. 5, to require the Under Secretary of Transportation for Security to approve applications from airports to authorize passenger and property screening to be carried out by a qualified private screening company.

Nelson (F1) amendment No. 34, to strike section 605.

Paul amendment No. 21, to reduce the total amount authorized to be appropriated for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal year 2011 to the total amount authorized to be appropriated for the Administration for fiscal year 2008.

Rockefeller (for Wyden) amendment No. 27, to increase the number of test sites in the National Airspace System used for unmanned aerial vehicles and to require one of those test sites to include a significant portion of public lands.

Inhofe amendment No. 6, to provide liability protection to volunteer pilot nonprofit organizations that fly for public benefit and to the pilots and staff of such nonprofit organizations.

Inhofe amendment No. 7, to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to initiate a new rulemaking proceeding with respect to the flight time limitations and rest requirements for supplemental operations before any of such limitations or requirements be altered.

Rockefeller (for Ensign) amendment No. 32, to improve provisions relating to certification and flight standards for military remotely piloted aerial systems in the National Airspace System.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I have comments of my own, but I will yield to the Senator from Maryland. He has been down here waiting. He is interesting, provocative, thoughtful, and always right. I yield to him such time as he may feel comfortable with, provided it doesn't go past 5 o'clock.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and congratulate him on the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. It is a bill that we can all be proud of. I thank him for his good work.

Mr. President, I rise to speak today on the legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration.

Our Nation's economy is recovering from the worst economic recession in decades. Critical to getting our economy moving forward and getting Americans back to work is building an efficient and modern intermodal transpor-

tation system built to handle growing commerce in the 21st century.

I am pleased to see that this legislation, which is estimated to create 280,000 jobs in airports around the country, is one of the first orders of business for the Senate in the 112th Congress. It demonstrates this body's focus on job creation and helping get Americans back to work while updating the Nation's aviation infrastructure to ensure that America is ready for business.

The airline industry accounts for nearly 11 million U.S. jobs and \$1.2 trillion in annual economic activity. This bill provides the airline industry the essential infrastructure it needs to succeed and remain strong and competitive in the global airline industry.

Every day, the Federal Aviation Administration faces the daunting task of marshalling thousands of airliners, and the air travelers on those planes, across the country from airports and airfields both large and small located in nearly every corner of the United States. These members of the Federal workforce safely guide thousands of airplanes, serving tens of thousands of air travelers, across America's skies every day.

I applaud Senator ROCKEFELLER's dedication to getting this much needed legislation to the floor of the Senate. I greatly appreciate his willingness in the last Congress to incorporate a provision of mine that is important to keeping small rural airports in Maryland and in other parts of the country in operation. I look forward to continue working to build upon the great work he has done to get this important bill moving forward.

This bill is not just important to our big airports; it's important to all airports in this country. There are many challenges facing the FAA and air travelers. This bill sets a clear path towards addressing these challenges, not the least of which is working to reduce the number of flight cancellations and the frequency of flight delays that can range anywhere from 10 minutes to 9 or more hours that air travelers experience.

This bill will reduce delays by more than 20 percent—save passenger time, money and reduce airline fuel consumption, making our country more energy secure and reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

While air travel remains a safe and fast way to travel between distant destinations, the technology is readily available to make essential improvements to our Nation's aviation infrastructure to make it even safer and faster.

The bill's authorization of facility and equipment funding reinforces the FAA's commitment to overhauling the guidance systems used to direct flights across the country. The deployment of NextGen flight systems will cut travel times and save energy by directing flights to take shorter routes that use less fuel.